

**MINUTES OF THE
CHILD WELFARE LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT PANEL**
Thursday, July 11, 2002 – 1:00 p.m. – Room 416 State Capitol

Members Present:

Sen. Dan R. Eastman, Senate Chair
Rep. Matt Throckmorton, House Chair
Rep. Trisha Beck
Rep. Jack Seitz

Staff Present:

Mr. Mark D. Andrews, Research Analyst
Ms. Stacey M. Snyder, Associate General Counsel
Ms. Alicia M. Laughlin, Legislative Secretary

Members Excused:

Sen. Gene Davis

Note: A list of others present and a copy of materials can be found at <http://www.image.le.state.ut.us/imaging/history.asp> or by contacting the committee secretary, Alicia Laughlin, at 538-1032.

1. Call to Order and Approval of Minutes

Chair Eastman called the meeting to order at 1:17 p.m.

MOTION: Rep. Beck moved to approve the minutes of the June 20, 2002 meeting. The motion passed unanimously, with Sen. Davis absent for the vote.

2. Implementation of the Performance Milestone Plan

Mr. Adam Trupp, Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), requested that the Division be able to return and report on the plan as more information becomes available.

3. Implementation of S.B. 17, "DCFS Management Information System Amendments"

Mr. Trupp updated the Panel on the implementation of S.B. 17. He indicated that DCFS has moved forward with the new system and is finalizing letters to notify the public of the new process.

Mr. Rick Schwermer, Assistant State Court Administrator, Administrative Office of the Courts, addressed the implementation of S.B. 17 and indicated that in order to be prepared for the new system a packet of information, which includes standard forms for petition and other processes, has been developed.

Ms. Mary Noonan, Attorney, Child Protection, Attorney General's Office, addressed the delay in hiring attorney general staff to assist DCFS in filing for petitions. She also indicated that her office is interested in tracking the actual cost of implementing the bill and will report its findings to the Panel in November.

4. Reports Due to the Panel – Follow-up

At its June meeting the Panel requested draft legislation to combine several statutes requiring DCFS to make reports to the Panel. Mr. Andrews distributed and reviewed "Consolidation of Child Welfare Oversight Reports" (2003FL-0069/001).

Mr. Trupp spoke in favor of the draft legislation.

MOTION: Rep. Seitz moved to approve draft legislation "Consolidation of Child Welfare Oversight Reports." The motion passed unanimously, with Sen. Davis absent for the vote.

5. Fiscal Maintenance of Effort

Mr. Jack Greene, DCFS, distributed "Cases Opened FY 99-FY02" and "Report to Child Welfare Legislative Oversight Panel." He explained charts in the handout and indicated that the average caseworker caseload has increased this year. He expressed concern about the Division's ability to maintain required services in light of budget reductions.

Rep. Throckmorton requested that a letter be drafted by staff with DCFS input, reviewed by the Panel, and submitted to Utah's federal delegation informing them of the consequences of not adjusting the poverty rate and the general problem of maintaining federal requirements while shifting funding responsibilities to the states.

6. Utah Foster Care Foundation

Mr. Paul Hicken, Auditor, Mr. Rick Coleman, Audit Manager, and Mr. Wayne Welsh, Auditor General, Office of the Legislative Auditor General, presented an audit of the Utah Foster Care Foundation. They indicated that the foundation provides valuable, but costly services. They concluded with recommendations to the foundation.

Rep. Beck asked if the number of children in foster care has increased. Mr. Coleman indicated that there are fewer children in the foster care system.

Mr. Dallas Pierson, President, Utah Foster Care Foundation, distributed "Foundation Analysis of Legislative Audit #2002-0004." He contrasted the services provided by the Foundation with those provided by DCFS in 1998 and indicated that they are not comparable. He said that 1,904 families have completed training to become foster care families this year.

Ms. Kelly Peterson, Director of Education, Utah Foster Care Foundation, addressed recruitment and training of foster care families by the Foundation.

Mr. Richard Shipley, Founding Chair, Utah Foster Care Foundation, indicated that the system is working well through the foundation's partnership with DCFS and emphasized that the quality of services provided has improved because of the Foundation.

7. Other Items / Adjourn

MOTION: Rep. Seitz moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously, with Sen. Davis absent for the vote.

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Chair Throckmorton adjourned the meeting at 3:55 p.m.